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Focus (1)

Vale

ROBIN DENNISTON

We are resisting the temptation, provided by the last number of PRISM under its Tufton Street Editors, to sing an apocalyptic swan-song and tell the Church the truth about itself. Looking ahead, looking back, looking around, even looking inside—it's all great fun but no good.

PRISM set out with many high hopes and intentions to provide bridges over gaps, comprehensible devotions for girl-friends, forums for this and that. Most of these intentions have never been realised; but there has been a certain consistency under its various editors, and a like-mindedness amongst its regular contributors on the matter of language. In a letter at the start of PRISM, Nicholas Mosley said, "*One of the things the magazine has got to do is to try desperately to avoid church language and to base its appeal on what would be called 'good' writing in the literary or journalistic sense. I realise that 'good' has no absolute value—it is just a taste—but there it is, and it is what sells articles and criticisms on the ordinary market. The reason why church publications don't sell on the ordinary market is not because no one wants to hear the church's views, but because people find the church's language* embarrassing. *I wish church writers would realise this: and study style and taste and not think that their failure to communicate is due to anything else.*"

There is a danger that because middle-class Christians, particularly clergy, are literate, it is assumed that any Christian can write. The fact is that communication in print is much more than literacy—good writing and even good journalism are crafts, and we wanted to carry on, to some extent, as craftsmen, and this involves criticising what we felt to be uncraftsmanlike work whether in the language of the Lambeth Conference Report or the Liturgical Commission's experimental services or of a missionary hand-out. This made *how* we said things part of what we were trying to *say*, and as to that, PRISM's readers won't need a recapitulation at this point. The most interesting discovery of all has been the growing body of readers

who, whether or not they like this or that number, or this or that contributor, share our presuppositions about the Church and the world.

* * * *

Parochial reform and all that. This is in the air and all success to Colonel Madge and the Keble Conference. But to all reformers we say, *don't* be put off by opposition and *don't* stop half way. The fact is that modifying the Parson's Freehold to achieve team ministries here and there is not enough, and no *rapprochement* with the Parochial Clergy Association is possible. Gore saw that for the Church of England to become religious, disestablishment, including consequent disendowment, was inevitable. Disestablishment is not a dirty word —nor even a radical word—the Church *must* be disestablished, and in our life-time. If it is not it will become impotent and useless— also in our life-time. In insisting that disestablishment was vital, we said in PRISM for January 1959: "*But all these matters are incidentals. And it is the position of the Church of England at the moment in its formal and empirical nature that it is not living the truth but living a lie. It is this lie that is rotting it and is causing disease. It is in itself a tragic criticism of the times that any more need be said.*"

Our disestablishment number was greeted with total silence. This seemed to us extraordinary. We are ready to join or if necessary found a party within the Church dedicated to achieving disestablishment. We have heard all the arguments in favour of the establishment of our Church and none of them begin to measure up against the fact that it has in many places made a mockery of our religion. And yet the most ardent supporters of parochial reform, who include all the brightest and best younger clergy, seem to shy away from the inevitable conclusion of their plans and hopes.

* * * *

Founding or joining parties has not been a Prismatic operation, and this apparent refusal to engage has irritated many people. Very largely this is a matter of temperament, and most dedicated lay churchmen, particularly the more able ones, feel they must join things, sponsor movements, speak at conferences, and write to the papers. Although we *have* done all these things (particularly as we ourselves are a paper) we believe that the only way that works is not to dash about but to be content to be servants of the local church and accept the limitations of the church (as Religious accept

monastic poverty) and our own limitations and trust in the Lord. To quote Nicholas Mosley again, "*I would have things to say in* PRISM *if I felt there was a movement outside writing to back; a cause to become part of. I don't think there is. I mean, here we have been eighteen months and there isn't. The Liturgical Movement can get on without us! The de-bourgeoisising of the Church isn't a cause—we can't go to Margaret Street with banners, i.e. one can't act socially about this—one can only state it and live it. And we stated it: and I can live it much the best in my parish. And I think I can go on stating it better in that way.*" This point, that one can only serve Christianity by being part of the local church and not a one-man evangelisation unit—to scientists, artists, chargehands or managing directors—is what intelligent missionaries like Anthony Barker are now saying. "*It is as a servant of the local church—of the congregation with which he worships—that the medical missionary has such importance as is his. He is, or should be, our expression of that care for the physical man which parallels the priest's care for the spiritual man . . . And if the missionary is judged, as I believe he is judged, not by what he does but by who and what he is; by his willingness to receive as well as to give; by his acceptance of his rightful place in the congregation, be that high or low, leader or servant; by his identification with the people among whom he is called to live, it follows that he must study to understand their ways and aspirations in order the more readily to commit himself*". *Giving and Receiving* (Faith Press) p. 165.

Sneering at conferences is easy and PRISM has often been accused of doing this, but ordinary people know that conferences don't produce results but only a new species of job—conference-going. It is a self-authenticating activity which people who really work hard, like housewives and miners, are rightly suspicious of.

* * * *

And then this matter of criticising. PRISM is criticised for criticising, and people say that this implies an attitude of intolerable superiority quite apart from not being "positive". No one denies there is plenty to criticise but it is felt disloyal to bring things out into the open. We have tended to think it more disloyal to keep quiet about the things which inhibit the Faith of the Church from showing itself; and we have no illusions about our superiority since we are not criticising "them" but ourselves. One doesn't have, unfortunately perhaps, *superior knowledge* which permits one to criticise, one

simply knows that something is wrong and feels impelled to say so.

The future seems almost incredibly bleak, one is only consoled by the Cockney gambit "it may never happen"; what we do know is in Fr. Kelly's words "we do what God lets us do".

Focus (2)

Ciao Bambina

CHRISTOPHER MARTIN

In the early days when people asked us what we were up to ("What, not *another* religious magazine!") I used to say that PRISM was to be a kind of Anglican *Crossbow;* or a holy *Encounter*. They were casual clever remarks, these, intended probably to irritate rather than inform those whose stalwart excellence we have since learnt to value. But looking back, it seems after all that they are not all that inapposite, and now that Timothy Beaumont's advent makes their realisation possible, I want here to examine their implications. Seductive nostalgia I hope is confined to the title.

Take first the *Crossbow* idea. Just about the time that PRISM started, three and a half years ago, *Crossbow* was beginning to get recognised as the voice of radical young Toryism; and although Macmillan was invited to draw the first arrow, the salvoes that have been issued since have been peppering complacent Blimpery pretty ruthlessly. Yet look what has happened. With James Lemkin, for instance, boldly anticipating Monckton, the Bow Group can now be counted in an honourable sense as part of the Tory establishment. No longer can the group be written off as irreverent and irrelevant young men. They are *in*, and to an outsider at least it looks as if they are a far more effectual force in Conservatism than the docile ranks at Scarborough who so disheartened R. A. Butler.

PRISM certainly cannot claim the same success. We are not even half way towards the circulation of 5,000 which we reckoned at the outset we might hope for from our contemporaries. And not all our readers (thank goodness) are our contemporaries. So far, then, none

of us, even after a PRISM dinner, has pretended that anything like a PRISM party has emerged in the Church of England. Certainly to left and to right of us, all sorts of groups have been evolving over these last few years, with views like those so often expressed in this paper. The New Churches Research Group, The Twentieth Century Church Light Music Group, as well as that untitled body of enthusiasm voiced in Nicholas Stacey's National Christian News have all arisen and hit even the popular headlines. ROCK 'N' ROLL PARSON and JAZZ IN CHURCH have certainly created a wide awareness that the Church of England is alive. It is good to have a lot of these enthusiasts as our friends. It is good also to find that subjects taboo only a few years ago, like the organisation and purpose of theological education, can now be frankly discussed, not only in *Theology* but even in the Church Assembly.

All this is heartening, yet nowhere, and certainly not round PRISM, has a coherent and compelling party arisen. One reason is that small groups of friends in different parts of the country have each been concerned with running their particular shows; this is all right, it is the way things happen. Another, and better reason, may be that we have seen too much of the bitter history of past Church wrangles and partisanship to want to foment any more. Nearest to the truth may be the fact that all these groups are made up of busy people who have furthered these various efforts in their leisure time, and have lacked the time and the money (or the capacity to raise it, which calls for different gifts) to enlarge the scope of their activities.

Now that PRISM has reached Bloomsbury Street, it is tempting to think that these limitations will no longer apply so stringently. It is tempting to think that having its shoestrings converted to bootstraps will enable PRISM to reach commanding new heights. Particularly, remembering the wider range of contributors and coadjutors on which it will now be able to call, it looks almost as if the various groups can now be summoned into a movement, with which to assault the mountains of prejudice and complacency and obscurantism still spied all around. Reaching a wider market, as it undoubtedly now will, able now also perhaps to sponsor the long dreamt of series of PRISM booklets, and have them get those puffs that at present the *Guardian* and the *Observer* reserve for the Fabians and Michael Young, it is an alluring picture.

Certainly when you think of the ill-concealed disdain with which the *Observer* treated the figure of the Anglican parson in their last

month's parson, priest and preacher series, and remember how heavily featured these articles were in *Observer* advertising, you are brought back to realise the sad picture which the quality reader likes buying. So back you come to the initial inspiration, and end up by hoping that now at last PRISM can be recognised as the lively and authentic voice of forward-looking Anglican opinion, and in the short time which is all prophets ever allow themselves, succeed in its allotted field in quickening the Church of England.

This leads me straight into the other analogy, a holy *Encounter*. For whereas to talk of *Crossbow* was to emphasise the radically orthodox intentions of PRISM towards the Church to whom it owes allegiance, to mention *Encounter* was to suggest that this paper should be looking outwards as well. Indeed in its earliest days, our hope was to provide something readable by girl-friends who would never be seen dead inside a Church bookshop. In this we have so far failed. Though we often used to try it on agnostic friends, and have from time to time wooed them with non-Christian contributions, understandably this paper has struck them as still far too churchy. They are no more interested in where you have the altar than we are in the seven flowers of Zen. That is to say, polite interest and even a desire to be interested jib at the first technicalities; and since our chief obligation is to our Church readers, we have neglected these others. Fat lot of evangelising you do, is the comment we have consequently earned. It would be a pity to have no conscience about this. Glib answers about our purposes to one-track crusaders are inadequate. We have all the time got to act as if our appeal was at least partly to outside. This is not just so that we can go on fostering illusions about PRISM's glorious future as a magazine that uniquely manages to make our religion attractive to assorted intellectuals. Covertly, I suppose, this is *Time and Tide's* job. Rather it is to provide us ourselves with an effective stabiliser to stop us falling into the very ruts we delight to plough up. By this I mean that to concentrate exclusively on our fellow Anglicans, hectoring and harrowing and banging away, in the end defeats its own object, and we might end up as awful sectarians, content in the belief that our own jazzed-up version of the Church was God's answer for the world.

God is not mocked, and it is only by remembering that our business is to study the nature and purposes of God that we are entitled to believe in the worth of what we are doing. Ecclesiolatry, however sophisticated our *latreia* and however streamlined our

ecclesia, is as wrong as it ever was. The Church is Christ's bride, not his wife, and to talk of it as if the marriage were consummated and we were self-appointed PRO to the happy pair is blasphemy. Theology is the study of God's nature and purposes, and theology is about far more than titivating the Church. It is also about a world in which the Church and the members of it, have no exalted station a little lower than the angels. Not while it is militant, anyway.

That is why I think that the greatest danger for PRISM in the years to come is that it will become the organ of a party within the Church. However excellent and up-to-date and liturgical and indeed theological the opinions of the people who might compose that party may be, by the fact of their partisanship and their three-manual organ to sound off on, they have betrayed their prophetic role.

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Towards An Apostate Church

I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church

VALERIE PITT

This is the most fashionable clause of the Creed, a must for the O.K. Christian. Obstinate pedants may insist on the lot, but the man who is out at the front knows he can ignore that unscientific stuff about rising from the dead, ascension and judgment. The real shibboleth is belief in the Church, and the inside jargon admits only Church phrases . . . Liturgy, the Body, Involvement, Corporate Action and Worship. If you wish to remain in the right set never suggest by word, or by going to an early celebration, that religion is a personal affair.

Very well. I believe in the Church. What is it? Those eloquent young theologues can all sit down. We have read the right books too, and agree that it is difficult to define the boundaries of the visible Church, that the Church must come out of the Sanctuary, that the Church is Us. None of this defines the nature or the function of the institution: none of this tells me to what I committed myself this morning when I said, "I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church".

And yet, if we are prepared to leave aside the complications of the unity question, it is not hard to find a working answer to the question. For, however misty the Church's frontiers, the Apostles, I think, were nationals of that country, and their doctrine of the Church is implicit in their actions. They preached the raising of Christ, and the forgiveness of sins. They baptised, and they broke bread remembering the Lord's death. For them the Church was, above all, a society of believers, and a society of the redeemed. They felt themselves to be set apart from the pagan world by a contract of forgiveness, in which the life of Christ laid down for them required and made possible the free and total surrender of their own lives to God. St. Paul speaks of this contract in intimate terms. It is a *putting on* of Christ, a *being in* Christ . . . not, that is, the practice

of a way of life in order to secure rewards, the exchange of benefits and obligations as in the old Covenant, but the exchange of the Christian's life for his Lord's. "Ye are dead", St. Paul says to the Colossians, "And your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." It would seem then, that in the famous passage about the Body of Christ, St. Paul does not use this term as a mere synonym for fellowship, or society. Christians are not Christ's Body because they are jolly good pals, or have paid their union dues, but because they are the organs in which Christ lives and acts. The Community of the Church is "in Christ" . . . the Lord who lives in his members is One . . . and it follows that his members are one.

The Christian then is a man so identified with Christ that he lives Christ's life. That identification is attained and sustained by certain rites in which the candidate is *buried* in his Lord's death, and in which he eats, at a common meal, His body and His blood. He qualifies for these rites by announcing his adherence to certain beliefs, without which indeed the whole performance would be mumbo jumbo. All this, though I have not space to quote, can be found in the Epistle to the Romans, and those to the Corinthians. Neither the extreme "Catholic", nor the extreme "Evangelical" are justified by Paul . . . a Christian is neither made by the subjective experience of personal conversion, nor by the performance of a rite, for membership in Christ requires two things: the individual's consent to our Lord, the declaration of belief made for or by him, and the Church's act in baptising him. And one can certainly not become a member of Christ by accepting in a rather vague way the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount, or by swearing off wine, women and song . . . for Christianity is not, as the Apostles taught it, an ethical or a universal religion. It is a mystery religion, the prerogative of initiates, and the Church is not an inclusive, but an exclusive society. The Church in the New Testament then is a society which believes and proclaims certain truths, and performs certain rites by which it initiates and sustains in its members a common and supernatural life. And this is the continuance of our Lord's own work. For the truth proclaimed is his revelation of God's love, the common life, the life he lives in us now. All this is what "I believe in the Church" commits me to. And all this when we contemplate the Church of England is uncommonly disquieting. The Lambeth Quadrilateral when it declares that the basis of Christian Unity

is the acceptance of Bible, Creed and Sacraments, makes plain the double commitment to rite and belief implicit in the Book of Common Prayer. There the young Christian is made, in the Catechism, to recite the Apostles' Creed, and to declare, first, that he was made a member of Christ in Baptism, then, that Baptism and Holy Communion are generally necessary to salvation. The exclusiveness of the Church is just as deeply embedded in Anglican as it is in Roman or Orthodox teaching. But the Anglican vanity is comprehensiveness . . . though our comprehensiveness is so much an accident of establishment that it is hard to be vain about it. When Church and State combine to insist that only an Anglican can be a responsible citizen, the Church must, in decency, allow some latitude in religious opinion. This position, which was always politically silly, became in the nineteenth century, theologically dangerous. The emotional life of our grandfathers was rooted in their childhood religion, and they were convinced that the nation's moral and cultural life was bound up with the Anglican Ethos. But their intellectual speculations forced them to deny the Credal foundations of this culture. One after another, the reluctant sceptics urged that the culture was more important that the doctrine, that the National Church must get out of the dilemma by re-fashioning its formulas to meet the nation's need for religious confidence. Two generations of honest doubt, before the Sidgwicks, and the Darwins and the Huxleys made unbelief respectable, brought a new element into Anglican comprehensiveness . . . the Jowett, or Barnes phenomenon . . . the Anglican who denies basic Christian belief and yet holds a teaching office in the Christian Church.

We are still haunted by the conviction that the national Church must accommodate itself to the Queen's agnostic or indifferent lieges. Worried dons (I heard them) suggest that we make the faith too difficult for outsiders: perhaps we should abandon the Creed altogether. But this is extreme, even for Cambridge, and besides we know a more excellent way. It is contained in the magic word *Communication*. Our difficulty, we say, is nothing so obvious as a mere difference about the truth: it is an obsolete way of thinking and talking. We do not abandon our doctrines—that would be very shocking—we reformulate them in the "thought patterns of the twentieth century". The first thing is to get rid of stuffy Prayer Book English . . . *never* please, must the Evangelist say "*Repent* for the Kingdom of *Heaven* is *at hand*". And there are certain concepts too

which the modern mind cannot accept . . . Ascension, Original Sin, the Second Coming. These doctrines have a *spiritual* truth, but we must, the sophisticated say, distinguish between the myth, the story form in which our Fathers expressed this truth, and the kerygma, the real content of revelation. This, in the popular pulpit, becomes this:

> 'Whether you regard it (The Virgin Birth) as factually true or as a meaningful myth seems to me comparatively unimportant so long as you appreciate the truth which the symbol expresses.'

The preacher goes on to talk of the symbol of the Virgin Birth. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.* This sounds like something out of *Literature and Dogma*, Matthew Arnold's classic statement of honest doubt.

The aim of honest doubt is to avoid the head-on clash of true and false, and its method to substitute for definite and difficult doctrines a vague sense of spiritual significance. Hence the attack on traditional language. We are all agreed that the Prayer Book is not designed as an instrument of Evangelism, but Tudor English has this merit: it is in general less abstract, more direct, more definite than modern English, and resists all attempts to confuse its meaning. Is it for instance, less difficult to understand this:

> 'Everything a man does "in the body" is not to be judged merely by the fact that this physical collocation of atoms will soon be dispersed as if it had never been. For what he does is being built into an order of reality, a structure of relationships which does not come to an end even with death.'

than this:

> 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God?'

To prefer the second to the first passage is not simply to say that language rooted in the senses has a greater impact on the imagination, it is to assert that such phrases as "order of reality", "structure of relationships", are indefinite in content . . . we do not know what we are expected to understand by them. In this kind of jargon all, except three or four, Anglican theologians, and all the reformulators muffle the inconvenient edges of doctrine. The word *Virgin* has, for example, a plain enough meaning. We may find it difficult to believe that "He was born of the Virgin Mary" is a statement of physical fact, but we know what is required of us. But what in

this context is a mythical birth, or a symbolic Virgin? The preacher's talk about the "symbol of the Virgin birth" is not, in itself, a meaningful phrase, but a signal for another meaning which I take to be this: "You may believe that Mary conceived not by the Holy Spirit but by her husband, and still say that Christ was born of a Virgin, because this is a way of saying that He was God Incarnate. For the purposes of faith, indeed, to say that Mary was a Virgin, and to say that she was not a Virgin mean the same thing."

This preacher is not a proud and isolated heresiarch . . . he simply follows the current Anglican custom of having the doctrinal cake and eating it. The most skilled at the art are the oecumenical theologians—their standards are Olympic—but everybody practises it . . . everybody from the Archbishop explaining to the Press the real meaning of "No vote was taken", to the Curate, thanking God that he has pleased to receive these children and to incorporate them into the Church, after he has told the parents that Baptism does not make the children Christians. It makes the heart sick. For at best this is muddleheaded—the fruit of an imperfect submission of the mind to God—at worst intellectually dishonest. And worst of all are the answers to any protest. Those who, for oecumenical or other purposes, practise a calculated ambiguity will not argue their case—indeed they cannot, for argument requires the definition of an opinion, and the essence of the business is to confuse two or more opinions into one. No, they suggest that those who hold by this or that dogma, who still suppose that the Church is exclusive in any way, are either suffering from out of date prejudice, or are uncharitable. Now the existence of false opinions is, up to a point, unimportant. The dialectic of the Faith, the marvellous balance which Christ preserves in the gifts and insights of His members, will always, in time, correct extremes. But the belief that to be in charity with my neighbour, I must agree with him, or at least believe his errors to be unimportant, inhibits this play and tension of thought. The truth cannot emerge from a static muddle. Besides our friends have placed a moral stigma on the care for exact meaning; the apex of charity is, to them, Pilate's question, "What, after all, is truth?

The end of all this is quite clear. It is still impossible to have your cake and eat it. My preacher thought it possible to believe that Christ was begotten by Joseph, and yet that He was Incarnate God . . . but in the past the belief that our Lord was Joseph's son has, almost invariably, developed into the denial of our Lord's Godhead.

So with our other ambiguities. Within the Faith one belief involves another—St. Paul says we cannot believe in the forgiveness of Sins and not believe in the Resurrection of the Dead. Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection, the Church—this is the logic of the Creeds, and our theologies develop from and move with the compass of these truths. Denial of, or ambiguity about any one of them, is not "comparatively unimportant"—it involves the whole faith, and threatens the believing community. Of course it is right to work for comprehensiveness. We should desire, and passionately, that all men should be "even as we are", but we have no commission to sacrifice to the hesitations of the outsider the certainties of the revelation entrusted to us.

I could, but for the want of space, say more. But this I will say to the fashionable Christian. "*I believe in the Church*" is a personal committal to a believing society. You may indeed have a vocation to draw a Godless world into the orbit of the Church's Sacrifice—but that vocation gives you no title to play ducks and drakes with Revelation, and with the spiritual lives of the Household of God, or with the Sacrament of the Lord's Body. There is, after all, more than one kind of uncharity.

In our last issue we stated that Sobornost seems to be the only review which works for Anglo-Orthodox relations. My attention has been drawn to the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association News Letter which has been working in this field for almost a hundred years. I apologise for this error.—ED.

I Believe in the Communion of Saints

Do I Really?

FREDA COLLINS

"I believe in the Communion of Saints . . ." The world would be more willing to believe we meant this if our indifference to this amazing credal statement were not so obvious both in our behaviour and in our intellectual assent.

The dictionary gives "sharing", "participation" and "fellowship" as the meaning of the word "communion". It adds: "body professing one faith" and "intercourse". It also mentions "participation in the Lord's Supper". All these descriptions are true of the "Communion of Saints"—those persons "in Christ", either still living in this world or in the next, who enjoy a real spiritual relationship with one another.

But do we, in our heart of hearts, think that there is communion between the saints in heaven and our struggling selves on earth? Or do we think that, in fact, we shall only be in communion with them after death? If so, are we not severely limiting the incomprehensible mystery of being "In Christ"? For Christ is not separated from us either by death or by life. Eternal Life *is* being "in Christ", now and hereafter.

That we cannot expect to understand an impenetrable truth, such as the Communion of Saints should not prevent us from participating in it—now. In fact we are expected to do so. Our Creed demands it.

The saints have won a closer union with God than other human beings who have died. It is naturally easier for us to communicate with the saints in the stream of God's love than with those whose love was not so strong, although all who have been baptised and who truly turn to God are in some degree "in Christ". It is this bond which cannot fully be understood by those outside the Church.

If we wish to have any practical knowledge of the world to come it seems to be only common sense that we should be aware of the

Communion of Saints from our earliest days. Those of us who have been brought up with a perfectly natural realisation that the Saints are truly alive will not find these friendships extraordinary. They also prevent an unreasoning fear of death, for if we really believe that when we have passed through that experience called death we shall meet our friends, the saints of God, "in Christ", then much of the natural terror is lost. Our knowledge of supernatural life comes through our spiritual friendships.

Today, when teaching the Faith to our children, we come up against a subtle difficulty in the Agreed Syllabus now taught in our State Schools which hopelessly confuses heroes with saints. Some heroes may indeed have been saints, but by no means all, and it is necessary to teach our Christian children to differentiate between the natural and the supernatural virtues. The Greeks and the Romans and also the barbarians produced courageous and heroic people whom we admire, but if we compare these with any of the saints of God, we shall see that our Christian virtues are the very ones which would be despised by pagans; to list only three of them, faith, humility and gentleness are not natural virtues. They have to be acquired directly from our Lord. Each has an element of that suspected word "sacrifice"; and it is just the sacrifice of the saints which, if properly taught, will attract not only children, but every genuine lover of Our Lord.

Lamentable harm has been done in the past by a too easy association of saints with some stained-glass windows which make spineless caricatures of these nearest of God's human friends. Some types of story have the same diluting effect. Lively, naughty children with the "gang" instinct are not likely to be drawn to such representations of the Saints of God, any more than we are ourselves.

To tell a story about a saint successfully we must not only know about him, but must love him. We should set about this in exactly the same way that we set about making our friends in this world: we get into communion with them.

Is there anything strange about that? We trust our friends in this world and presumably we may equally trust our friends in the next. To confine them to the pages of history and to speak of them as though they are dead and gone is to impoverish the Christian life. Also it is to act in direct opposition to this clause in the Apostles' Creed in which we constantly proclaim our belief.

Saints are not angels. We must be completely clear about that and must see that the children know the difference that there is between that pure spirit, their guardian angel appointed by God, and their patron saint who is still the same human being as when living upon earth but whose human will is now in complete union with the Will of God. A child may get the distinction more easily than the possibly slightly self-conscious adult who is only just beginning to realise the joyous inheritance we share in the "Communion of Saints".

This joyous inheritance includes the opportunity for sharing our troubles with, and securing the help of the saints, which is only reasonable with all true friends.

"Why didn't you tell me? I could have helped you!" cry our friends in this world when we have failed to rely on their love. We are ashamed. We do not like to say "I didn't think you would be interested", or, more brutally, "I forgot all about you". But this is indeed how we so often treat our spiritual friends, to our own great deprivation and loss.

The saints are real people who once had faults and failings and the courage which eventually surmounts difficulties against apparently insuperable odds. These are the people who encourage us to realise the indwelling of the Holy Spirit during our own battles against evil. Clearly the saints could not have done what they did and suffered what they suffered unless they had been filled with the Holy Spirit. They themselves are the first to give the glory to God.

If only we adult Christians would cease making difficulties, and accept the spiritual world, as our Lord bade us, "like little children"!

"Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with *all the company of heaven . . .*"

Worker Priests: Amateur . . . . .

William Pears

I am all in favour of worker-priests—in theory. I am in favour of anything that brings the clergy closer to the people and relates religion to life. But in practice it is not so easy.

I am rector of a country parish and it was my intention to become a part-time worker on the land, with the following aims in view.

First, to make contact with the agricultural members of the parish, who are represented in the Church only by the farmers themselves, not by their employees.

Second, to share with the laity at large, the problems and demands of a normal working life.

Third, to restore to the laity a full share in the government of the Church and achieve a more balanced community, by ceasing to be a full-time ecclesiastical official.

As long as the parson is available at all times for all jobs, it is natural that a disproportionate responsibility should devolve on him, both in policy and the execution of policy. If he is energetic, the Church prospers; if he is slack, the Church declines.

I argued that if I also had a job to do, I should meet the laity on equal terms, and a better sharing of responsibility would result. My own special function within the Church, the cure of souls, would be recognised, and no one would expect me in addition to chair innumerable committees, edit the parish magazine, run the youth club, meet the architect, design the posters, etc.

With all this in mind I approached a farmer who is a sidesman and a member of the Church Council, explained my intention and asked for a job. He said there was not much doing just now, but next spring he might have something to suggest.

Next spring came and went, I tackled him again. He was clearly embarrassed. "Plenty of skilled labour round here . . . Don't know what I could put you on . . . It's rather difficult."

I tried another farmer who also said he would let me know and didn't.

Finally I had to accept that in this parish at least I was not wanted as a farm labourer. I should have to revise my ideas.

Since then I have done what I can to achieve at last the first of my aims, to make contact with those who have least to do with the Church. I play in a skiffle group, I am learning to play football, and I have a coffee bar in the rectory grounds.

But I do not work on the land—except, that is, at harvest time, when the farmers are short-handed. Then I become the truly rural parson, seated magisterially on the combine or bowling gaily along on a tractor. I enjoy my annual excursion into agriculture. It leaves me with a stiff back, a pile of unanswered letters, and a sense of comradeship.

With this I have to be content. But I wonder sometimes if the answer might not be a working community at the centre of the Church's life. Perhaps, when the glebe tenancy runs out, and if I could find someone to help me, I might . . . ?

But the door-bell is ringing. The fete secretary has come for the posters.

. . . . . *and Professional*

TONY WILLIAMSON

A priest in the Church of England is ordained to a four-fold function. First he is to be a Messenger, Watchman and Steward of the Lord; transmitting God's messages, he is to watch that God's laws are obeyed and as a steward in the Church he is to see that the whole of creation, animate and inanimate, is used to the purpose willed by God; in fact he is to follow in the footsteps of the Old Testament prophets, bringing God's words to his people and pointing out where people are going wrong, in all aspects of life, private, social and industrial.

The priest is ordained, secondly, to "Teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family"; this pastoral aspect of the ministry has most of the Ordinal devoted to it, and today it occupies practically all the time of parish priests.

Thirdly he is to "Seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever." The priest is to be a missionary in England just as much as anyone sent abroad.

The fourth function is not stated specifically but is to be assumed from the very word "Priest" used throughout the service; he is to focus men's corporate (as opposed to personal) relationship with God.

I have been ordained Deacon in preparation for priesthood next year. Like all priests I will be ordained to be Prophet, Pastor, Missionary and Priest. But most parish priests spend practically all their time on the Pastoral and Priestly aspects; because their lives are centred round the church building and church people, they seem to find it hard to speak out and act on behalf of God in secular and industrial affairs; similarly because their time is taken with pastoral work and the chores of keeping the church organisation going (including services, teaching, preparation for Baptism, Confirmation and Marriage, sick visiting, etc.) parish priests have little time for the thousands in their parishes who have no contact with their own church or any other.

But since I am ordained in a parish containing three churches and three parish priests, my first object is to do the sort of work that the parish priests cannot do. As a Priest I will be among 13,000 factory workers for most of my time rather than among the "faithful", and pastorally I will be available to people out of contact with the Church rather than with those already well known to the parish clergy. As a missionary I will try to break down the prejudices and misunderstanding built up over the years by being with them, caring for them and being genuinely interested in the things that concern them. As a prophet I will take a deep interest in the purpose and running of industry and government; I am an active member of the Transport and General Workers Union and of the Labour Party, and through these bodies I will work for the improvements and changes that seem necessary.

The prejudice and misunderstanding of people towards the church are deep, particularly among people in industry. Many men hark back to the working conditions of the last century and the unemployment of the 1930s; they feel that the church didn't care for them then and doesn't care for them now except as figures in church. Looking at local churches, they see them as self-centred organisations competing for money, membership and helpers with other churches,

community associations, political parties, co-op guilds, sports clubs, etc.; all of these organisations seem to say, "If you really care for *our* aims, you will come to *our* meetings (or services) and give your spare time and money to developing *our* organisation." The spirit of service is not an obvious quality of the churches to those outside. In addition to standing for justice, I hope by being active in union and political matters, as well as personal, to show that the church does care. Whether we like it or not the church is identified with the clergy in a way that it is not with the laity; in fact one union officer said to me, "I and many others respect you as a layman; but when you are ordained we will feel that if there is a serious dispute, the church will force you to take the side of management."

This clericalism is no reason for clergy doing the work of laity; but if the laity are going to present a real Christian challenge, more help is needed than is now available. It is recognised that the sphere of industry is one of the hardest for a man who is trying to live out his Christian faith. It is therefore not enough for clergy, often knowing little about it, to urge their laymen to witness for Christ; some of those who are the trained and acknowledged spiritual leaders should be there with the laymen, to learn together and to help each other, and this may well be the prime function for priest-workmen today. We should also remember the conclusion of Bishop Ted Wickham's book "Church and People in an Industrial City" that since the start of the industrial revolution manual workers as a whole have been outside churches of all denominations; this means that among manual workers there are very few Christians who are able to witness, and they, just like those at other levels, seem to have very little impact.

That there is little impact is hardly surprising. For modern large-scale industry has developed completely separately from the church, and now the system reigns supreme with individuals disappearing into it like cogs in a machine. In a factory of 13,000 it seems to make very little difference if someone dies or leaves, whether he be fitter or secretary, cost accountant or managing director. If, as in 1956, overseas markets close to British cars, thousands of men will have to be laid off in the car industry; the unions may ensure that they are laid off gradually, and strictly according to length of service, but the fact remains that the men become redundant; they cannot provide profits for the company, so they must go; the men know

quite well where their value lies, in spite of high sounding phrases about "working as a team" and "serving the nation", and so their major interest at work becomes centred in what they can get out of it—the wage-packet. When bishops and clergy then say glibly that "you must do your work as unto God", the men give a knowing look and either say that the church is even more out of touch than usual or ask what else one can expect them to say when the Church Commissioners are one of the largest shareholders in the country.

Apart from this, the clergy seem to steer clear of the subject of work, thus ignoring a vital part of life and encouraging their people to live two lives—one at home, in church and in their leisure time, the other at work. This means that a large section of life is being ignored by the church, in direct contrast to the church's belief in God the Father who created and creates the whole world and the Incarnate Son who lived a complete human life on earth and came that men might have life and have it more abundantly and that the world might attain its intended perfection; salvation therefore means the wholeness of all life not just the religious part of it. Many English people deplore the fact that the Russian Church cannot speak out or act on social or political issues—they must stick to religion. Yet in England it is felt by most to be wrong to touch such issues in church or parish magazine; of course to uphold the *status quo* is perfectly all right and considered to be non-political!

There are some things definitely wrong today, and we should work for them to be put right; we cannot all do everything, but we can let it be known where our feelings lie and give support to those who are doing something. The choice before us, clergy or laity, is not whether to be political or non-political, but whether to accept the present state of the world as perfect or to work for its improvement. If we think we are choosing between the first two alternatives, there are many outside the church who think we have chosen between the second two.

One major basic issue I will mention. Are we satisfied that profit should be the deciding factor in world development and individual life? The purpose of industry is to provide profits for the shareholders, and it is for this purpose that shareholders employ a board of directors. The only criterion in production is profits; the only limiting factors are the power of unions in regard to their members' pay and conditions of work and the consumer's refusal to buy what he does not want or what is too badly constructed for his needs.

Safety takes a very low priority, as has been shown by some recent public inquiries and confirmed by my own and many others' experience. Employers need take little notice of conditions for people living near factories, or of whether articles produced are dangerous or socially undesirable. The only way the national needs can be enforced is by direct increases or restrictions on profits, i.e. by government donations and cheap loans to firms building factories in certain areas, or by increasing tax or bank rate. Meanwhile the men in industry and commerce are just cogs in the vast profit-making system; they have no essential status or personality and their purpose in life is to provide more profits. It is fashionable to talk of the equality of all races, but in fact the purpose of underdeveloped countries is to provide raw materials at the lowest possible price, in order to increase the profits all round and to make the few prosperous countries even more prosperous. There is trouble in Africa and elsewhere, and it is not likely to be reduced very much while there is such an enormous difference between the standard of living, education and opportunity there and elsewhere. But there is little hope of improvement, for development cannot come without investment, and virtually all capital available can only be invested where there is a certainty of high and secure profits—which rules out much of Africa and Asia. The Communists have tried to change this system, but have only succeeded in replacing capitalism by nationalism; the enrichment of individuals has given way to the enrichment of the state. As Christians it is no good discussing honesty, gambling, swearing, sex, etc., if we are going to leave untouched this whole gigantic system which controls most of life, which is the cause of the lack of purpose for men today, and which prevents men throwing themselves wholeheartedly into a worthwhile job. It is just like the Pharisees "straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel". If we believe that the resources of the world should be used for the benefit of all, that man was made in the image of God, that men should live at peace with one another in one church believing in one God, then we cannot accept all that goes on in the world today. I for one have joined and am active in the Labour Party; I do not think it is perfect, but it seems to me to be the best means to the end, and at the moment the only real hope for radical change.

Similar thoughts to the above are being expressed by many industrial chaplains. But already some of these have been refused

access to factories when managements have discovered that Christianity does not just mean making men more trustworthy, more obedient to their superiors, and harder workers. I wonder how many managements would allow really radical Christians more access to their factories than they allow to Communist party officials. Nevertheless industrial chaplains do seem to be doing an immense amount of good work among the leaders on all sides of industry, in getting to know them and helping them to face some of the real issues of the day. But I wonder how much they, or parish priests, can do among the majority of manual workers. I have already said that there are few Christian laity among them; many churches can boast a manual worker or two, and parish priests are often quick to mention the few, very few, whom they can chat with; but the majority seem to be right out of touch and since so many cannot express themselves in discussion unless the topic and background are held in common, and since conversation on anything out of the ordinary sometimes takes weeks of short exchanges, I cannot see how clergy, whose work is based on occasional short visits, can hope to improve the situation. This, as well as much that has gone before, implies criticism of the present parochial system; it calls for rethinking at all levels, and a close liaison between all those working in different ways, but criticism, whether it be of the parochial system or of the profit motive in industry, does not imply a demand for the immediate destruction of all that exists, but rather a careful and humble examination of the present, followed by plans for improvement and the courage and resolve to put such plans into action.

There are other things involved in this way of life, and one of them is money. I receive no payment from the church, except of course travelling expenses if I am asked to go specially to a place a long way away, and my pay as a manual worker in the car industry is roughly equal to the pay and allowances of a married curate-in-charge of a church. However much people respect all the good work done by clergy, there nearly always seems to be the feeling that clergy are really paid to get people to church, and therefore the successful vicar is one with a full church; it may be a good thing if some of us are paid for something completely different, so that any church work we do is clearly voluntary. Then there is the insecurity of the wage-status; I have mentioned the volatile nature of the car-industry, but wage-earners in other industries are not much more secure, since only a week's notice is needed or given before dismissal;

sickness means no pay for most manual workers, except for the £2 10s. a week National Insurance benefit for the single man, increased to £4 a week for a married man; also holiday with pay for most manual workers means half or two-thirds pay, since production bonuses and incentive payments are only received for work actually done. It is perhaps good that some of us who speak out against the present materialism should share this insecurity of material things.

For material things do matter and they do have a great influence over our lives. And so I must try to live and talk the Gospel in the material terms understood by the people. This is not just a matter of translating the Gospel into understandable terms (though in fact how much do metaphors and parables based on vines and fig trees mean to people in Birmingham and London?). The issues are rather how to treat people in our everyday contacts, especially when we are meeting the same people more or less casually nearly every day; how we can really love people and disagree with them over basic issues that may lead to industrial disputes or the loss of a job; how to use money, and whether to work overtime, thus being at home less, in order to buy something or provide a holiday for the family; how to treat the property of the firm; how to regard practices such as employees taking scrap bits for jobs in the home, using expense accounts, tax-dodging, etc.; how to use time—overtime, time at home, at church, at church meetings and clubs, in secular organisations; how to judge how hard to work by day—should one be tired out at the end of the day or still have enough energy for other things? Should one work harder to cover the job of a man out sick, or demand that the firm employ a number of men to fill the gaps?—how to face the problem of how far one should risk one's job by standing for safety and the rights of individuals, or by being active in trade unions or politics. These are just some of the issues through which the Christian faith has to be expressed—the answers to which often mean more and hurt more than careful statements of belief.

To end, I will return to my relationship with the parish clergy. I have said that a most important part of my task is to help the laity to live out their faith in secular life. But what of parish life? There is plenty of instruction on prayer and on club work and parish work for the laity. But isn't most of this based on the experience of clergy who have been trained at theological college and who can spend

part of their working hours on their daily prayer? Isn't much of the idea of lay parish work based on helping to do what the clergy would do if they had time, in the way the clergy would do it? As an example I think of the street-visiting schemes for the laity; these are often good and work well. But unless the visiting is based on asking for certain particulars or inviting to certain functions, the layman's job is much harder than that of the man in a clerical collar, who is expected just to visit for the sake of getting to know people (and of getting them to church!). Shouldn't we think more of the people who are known casually through daily contacts in the streets, shops, offices, buses, factories, etc., since most of us work to a rough kind of a routine each week and meet many of the same people as we lead our normal lives? It would be harder to plan and less exact, but might well provide a more realistic lay approach and a more Christian impact of giving rather than getting. Perhaps the present shortage of clergy may even result in the realisation that the laity not the clergy must present the real impact of the Christian faith, and then that the clergy must be trained so that they can really help the laity and do the things which the laity need not or cannot do. I hope that the present priest-workmen may be making a step in this direction.

Horrors and Blessings of an Anglican Sunday

A Correspondent

Quantitatively the horrors certainly predominate: beginning as they do at 7.55 a.m., when a man is not, or should not be, at his best. The English only fight reasonably well on a full stomach, as Nelson knew; but both the Communities to which I have the honour to be attached insist, Pope or no Pope, on a rigid fast from midnight. I only obtained a reluctant dispensation in the matter of taking aspirin tablets "provided I put it in my next confession"; but as in my next confession my next confessor testily bade me leave it out, the matter may be said to rest *sub judice*. Thus it is in an apparently unavoidable undevotional temper that I open my front gates for the passage of my wife's car. At this point a large sable limousine, hired I believe from the undertaker, sweeps past with a tenuous load of Papists on their four mile drive to a shrine favoured by their persuasion, seeking to get precisely the same Thing (a theological expression I am borrowing from the Catechism) as we are after at the village church a few hundred yards away. The spectacle, I fancy justifiably, gets my doctrinal goat, and I am tempted to wave my wife on and into them. We could then walk our distance and they would be impossibly late. Considerations of expense enable me to avoid what would *probably* turn out to be a sin; and I content myself with shaking a fist in their wake and shouting "Down with the Pope". I am afraid they never quite catch the words and misunderstand the gesture for they remain the most charming and charitable of neighbours. Indeed on the Feast of Assumption, which we used to keep at our village church until His Holiness made it obligatory, I relent sufficiently to give one of them a lift to his place of worship, which lies on the route to mine. Why is it that Roman Catholicism so natural and unaffected on the Continent becomes so intolerable when transported across the Channel? I suggest it is because the Roman English dodge the column and take a short cut, leaving the rest of us to travel the long and weary way Home; which is the only true road.

Indeed, come to think of it, this paper is mostly about that, which perhaps will excuse its impropriety.

We reach the lychgate of St. Nicholas, reverse the car with the mundane object of a quick getaway to the breakfast sausage, and park before the war memorial. It is a good place since it is regarded as semi-sacrosanct and no one else quite likes to occupy it. St. Nicholas, from the outside, is too early Victorian to be believed: inside, it has been demurely becoming higher and higher for the last hundred years; it is now full of furnishings and dim religious light, so that even in high summer electricity is often needed. Attendance at what we staidly describe as "Early Service" (I once at a P.C.C. meeting inadvertently referred to Low Mass, producing thereby silence for the space of half an hour) is for a country church good; double figures even on the wettest of Sundays, and usually round about twenty, including of course, mostly, elderly and female faithfuls who form the backbone of Holy Church. (In Church Triumphant the boys should have a grand time by the look of the average congregation in its Militant counterpart). In seating ourselves there are two conventions; the first is that any family, however large, must be fitted into one pew: and the second is "not too far in front". Both these are violated by my wife and myself; for she, like her Chaucerian predecessor, wishes to be first at the Offertory; and I have taught my family not to breathe down my neck when I am at my devotions.

The Service is done with that perfection of purity and recollection which can be attained by a priest who will allow "The Lord's Supper or Holy Communion" to go its stately, quietly dramatic way without the imposition of his own personality, as is the manner of some. There is no server and the vestments are white. The idiosyncracies of the congregation are various; here and there a sign of the Cross is dabbed on a little furtively; a few of us get driven to our knees as the Creed recalls the Incarnation; but the majority continue to confront bolt upright that fell Event. "Father would not have approved of kneeling" is the usual comment; and the suggestion that if we always followed Father's practices, we should still be living in caves, cuts no ice whatever.

Three times a year we go madly mediaeval; and St. Nicholas at Christmas, Easter and the autumn occasion termed by the irreverent the Feast of the Holy Potato, blazes with colour which at any other season of the year would meet with the gravest dis-

approval, if not with threats of mass secession. However it is all right on the day, and the village is there by the hundred, converting the Lord's Supper into a prolonged Communion. The effort of a few of us to restore the balance, and incidentally to lighten the Vicar's enormous task, by receiving in one kind, was unsuccessful: the onset of a fainting fit was suspected, and we had some difficulty in avoiding being carried out bodily for revival. In the church porch my personal refuge in such lengthy and soporific conditions has always been the Rosary, since I am not as good as some at maintaining a steady stream of devotion; and opine that it is wise in my case to leave it to the expert. I only once was so careless as to leave the Beads in my pew: they were returned in an envelope marked "Disinfected".

But usually it is not long after 8.30 before we are back at blessed coffee and a dish of sausages already half cooked the night before; the which consumed, one must get into corduroys and wellingtons to feed the beasts. If one attends all three services on an Anglican Sunday, which for long I did, six changes of clothing are required during the day. By the time a very small hole has been made in the *Sunday Times* the bells are ringing for Mattins, to which we walk. Now Mattins, being designed mainly for monks, is not an easy service with its Psalms, Lessons and Canticles. But at St. Nicholas we have made it infinitely less intelligible by adopting every addition, omission, and variation which can be gleaned from the 1928 book. I often wonder how it all got past so basically conservative a body as our parish. The answer appears to be that of the signboard in Joseph Vance: if once you can slip a thing in or up, it is taken as having been always there.

The sermon is hortatory: we are recommended to behave a bit better than is our already fairly decorous custom: particularly we are advised to follow the less dramatic clauses of the Sermon on the Mount. On more controversial matters we are left uninstructed: I still cannot imagine why the Sower neglected the basic rules of gardening, nor why the Christos did not exclude our sweethearts and wives from the women we must not look upon with desire thus apparently committing adultery in our hearts. But, then, having heard 5,063 sermons without remembering the contents of any one, I ought not to speak on such a matter. At St. Nicholas they seem to form the highlight of the proceedings, are listened to with rapt attention, and the absence or indistinctness of one is the subject of caustic comment.

The lessons are regarded as bait for such elderly gentlemen as might otherwise remain at home. It is unfortunate that one of the few arts a public school never teaches is that of articulation. Evensong is the same, but much more so; here we really let ourselves go on community hymn singing and petitions for almost anything not ordinarily prayed for which can be thought up: so the choir, which is quite large and mostly boys, comes into its own: so does the organ (a good one) and the organist (first class), let alone His Reverence, who has a fine baritone voice. Unfortunately our ancestors ordained that all those three musical components should be boxed together in a small chancel, where none can possibly be aware of what the others are doing. The congregation listens to a choice of three notes and after a pause joins in on a fourth. The proposal to place the choir elsewhere is regarded as either too high or too low or probably both: while an offer by the ungodly to clear the chancel with axes has not hitherto been seriously considered.

The charming Victorian custom of pewrents has only just disappeared from our midst; the Puritans were bound to get their teeth into so pleasant an anomaly in the end. Not that, except financially, the change has made the least difference; and we retire, like dogs to their baskets, to our accustomed place. The absent-minded or malicious sidesman who plants a visitor in the seat held by Miss Pebble for forty years can create quite a worthwhile rumpus.

On the first Sunday of the month we come out with a bit of a splash—Mattins followed by Holy Communion sung, invariably to Marbecke. In fact for once we pay attention to the Book of Common Prayer: with the most unusual results; for the innovation, restoration or what you will, creates a tidy liturgic schism. The Mattins congregation waits till the end of Antecommunion and then walks out *en bloc* complaining of the absence of the Blessing. At this point a number of elderly dames who have been shyly sheltering in the porch slide in, pneumonia and pleurisy having now depleted their ranks: and a third party brazenly omits Mattins altogether, and arrives late and stays to hear Mass—in spite of the Devil, lightly disguised as a Cocktail, who is almost always obtainable at some hospitable house if one leaves in time to join the Sunday Social immemorially held in the churchyard by all Mattins-goers after Divine Service.

One sin we all avoid. We none of us subscribe to the dictum "a

little of what you fancy doesn't do you any harm". So we stick to our parish church, do our duty in that state of life into which it has pleased God to call us, according to our catechism, and never gad about after any service that "suits" us.

We are something like this, perhaps, in about two-thirds of the parishes of England, mostly the rural parishes. Any donkey, like myself, can poke fun at it: I hope unrepentantly that I have done so; for if we cannot have a bit of laughter at our own expense upon the long journey home, then God help us. In this Church of England I was born and was baptised, and in this I mean to die; with, but if necessary without, the last sacraments, which in country districts are hard to come by in a hurry. For I am persuaded, and more than persuaded after some seventy years, that here in Ecclesia Anglicana survives the real Church of St. Gregory the Great and St. Augustine, the real Roman Catholic Church of England. And if I am challenged upon such a point, then I shall unashamedly refer to a miracle: for no body of Christian men has survived so long by so continuous a succession of events so clearly under the hand of the Lord God, as has the Church in England over the last four hundred years. In bitter humiliation and with some pitiful resistance we lasted out the violence of Henry VIII and the spoliation done in the name of his son; we survived the Spanish restoration of Queen Mary made horrible by the reek of burning flesh: we underwent without loss of our identity the clever healing manipulation of the lightly equivocal fingers of the Great Queen: and when in 1570 she was deposed and excommunicated by Pius V we closed our ranks, Catholic and Puritan alike, against the Papal fifth column; for which act of patriotism we remain severed from the Western Church to this day. We perished at the hands of the Puritans and yet lived on as recusants under the long sword of Oliver: we saw off the last of the Popish plots under Charles and sent his successor packing. The chill non-conformist hand of William III was laid upon us to remove our leaders; but this and the dead century of the Hanoverians left us still alive. Not even the defection of Wesley, so nearly our St. Francis, killed us; nor that of the lost leader in 1845. A century later we look like surviving the attack of the Roman Hierarchy which that conversion ushered and I rather think that in Kingdom Come St. Nicholas, which now goes on its way weeping, will come again to the Blessed Company, not without welcome and bearing its sheaves with it.

Comment

What right has a Christian to be preoccupied with his physical survival? Perhaps not much. The Archbishop of Canterbury pointed out, quite rightly, that it could be the Will of God that the human race as it now knows itself should be destroyed, and as Christians we learn to submit gladly and thankfully to God's Will.

But in our hearts we all believe this situation, and the consequent religious attitude, to be hypothetical. It is one thing to say that all men have to die, and quite another that they must all die horribly in the same quarter of an hour.

That being so, all action leading towards the avoidance of a full-scale nuclear war is theologically permissible: not only theologically but practically the only thing wholly worth doing.

The threat of such a war has advanced and receded in recent years. Now an American group of scientists have said it will happen in fifteen years. The UNO Assembly uproar and the postponement of disarmament talks forces us to think about H-bomb obliteration practically. The Services are making extensive plans for the resumption of life, somewhere and somehow, after H-bombs have fallen on Britain. The assumption is that London will be the chief target, and therefore presupposing a prevailing south-west wind, life may still be livable around West Cornwall. It all seems so silly, and that is because we are temperamentally incapable of genuinely envisaging its consequences—if we could do that we would be bound to ensure that it did not occur. Here Mr. K. and total disarmament seem to have more logic on their side than the West and the stockpiling of "ultimate deterrents". What are the causes of war and what is the real likelihood of our being destroyed in a nuclear holocaust? Unless we face these questions there is no point in asking any others.

In John Freeman's historic television interview with C. G. Jung, he asked the great man, who had already said he could see from his clinical study of the unconsciousness of Germans in the '30s the inevitability of the second world war, whether he thought a third, and nuclear war would happen. Jung seemed, for the only time in the interview, baffled. "I don't know, I don't know", he said, and went on to say that if the conscious apprehension of its consequences

can dominate the unconscious urge to war, war will not happen. But will such apprehension be strong enough? Conscious apprehension is simply the fear of violently dying an unhallowed death. And if we accept what Jung says, all efforts to increase this—by campaigns for nuclear disarmament or any other way—should be supported. (Not that unilateral nuclear disarmament by itself is any more than a suggested, and highly dubious, means of securing peace; its value lies chiefly if not wholly in the attention it focuses on the reality of nuclear war.)

But what of the unconscious urge to war? It is this, simply and solely, that is the cause of war, in men and in nations. It is the progressive alienation, in Jungian concepts, of the dark side of our natures from the light side until there is no communication between them—a state one could call hypocrisy or schizophrenia depending on what type of observation you were making. It then only requires the dark side to dominate, by means of various quasi-religions of a totalitarian nature, and war, unconsciously longed for, is inevitable. When, as in the West, established religions and their symbols have lost much of their ancient power, these cthonic forces assume greater power than ever.

If this is the cause of war, what should be its prevention? The building up of conscious apprehension, without a positive return to religion, is necessary but clearly not sufficient. The specifically mid-twentieth century fear of death and dying—conscious apprehension—is a result not of religion but of lack of religion. Death is a reality and ours is a civilisation which is frightened of reality. Whether our progressive dissociation from the realities of life in food, in sex, in the love of the countryside, is the cause or the effect of our hysterical fear of death is a matter which requires special examination. But being frightened of death and hence of nuclear warfare, we try to pretend that they don't exist, by extending life by means which bring no credit to medicine or comfort to the old, by passing off as entertainment things which merely conceal the passing of time, by thinking about anything except the one thing which ultimately matters (in the sense that if *that* is solved, life and hence other problems can be tackled, but if *that* comes there is no more life and therefore no more problems)—an all-out nuclear war.

This is the point at which the preacher's temptation to say "What we all need is to be re-energised by the Holy Spirit" is almost irresistible. But it must be resisted. Why? Because though it is true,

we all know, including the preacher, that it won't happen, or at any rate that saying it won't make it any more likely to happen. The nuclear disarmers will say their piece and we will listen with respect because they are good people and believe what they say and practise what they preach. But many of us find we cannot join them on their marches, not because of their presuppositions about the absolute evil of nuclear war (which are in fact shared by almost all bodies of informed opinion) but because of a failure of logic in their argument that *unilateral* nuclear disarmament (a possible *means* of achieving peace) is an end in itself—i.e. is desirable whatever the consequences.

If we decide not to accept the impractical conclusion of the professional preacher on the one hand or commitment with the anti-nuclear campaigners on the other, what, as Christians, are we left with? Ourselves, our children, and God. We can try to face, squarely and constantly, the results of a nuclear war. We can, if we are so placed, try to persuade governments, statesmen and all other people similarly to face nuclear facts, and to act on what they see. And after that (and before that and during that) we can pray: "Thy will be done, in earth, as it is in heaven".

* * * *

In the *Church Times* a few weeks ago the Parochial Clergy Association reported that its conference stated "that every incumbent should receive £1,000 a year net plus expenses of office, with a free house or its equivalent".

The effect of the words after the numeral is to make the total gross figure between £2,000 and £2,500 p.a. per clergyman. No-one will deny that many clergy are underpaid but it is difficult to square this bald statement (the receiving of this sum should have, apparently, no relation to the work done, and indeed carries no obligation to do any work at all) with either the words of Our Lord in the New Testament or the spirit of Christianity as evinced by the Calvinist monks of Taizé, whose Prior, Roger Schutz, writes in a book shortly to be published in this country that the future of Christianity will be decided by how far the Christian countries of the west, whose standard of living is thirty-five times as high as it is in the Far East, distribute their surplus wealth to those who need it. This is the point which the Bishop of Llandaff, alone among the Episcopate as far as one can see, is taking up practically, first in his discussions with the members of the British Association, which established that (*a*) it

was *possible* to find enough food for all but (*b*) the cost would be huge, and secondly by putting the matter forcibly and effectively before the Church. In the same number of the *Church Times* he wrote: "The problem is what is a Christian to do in such circumstances, where the problems are so vast as to call not simply for individual but also for communal sacrifice on a very large scale? We can only hope to tackle it in separate bits and pieces, and I am trying to discover what Christians can do along these lines now that we have united expert opinion that the problem is not insoluble, given the readiness to spend vast sums of money on the part of the better-off countries."

The connection between the spirit of Dr. Glyn Simon and Prior Roger Schutz, and that of the Parochial Clergy Association quoted above is obvious enough. Which will prevail?

R. D.

* * * *

Creeds and credulity provide a link between two recent conferences. The first was a seminar, held in the dollar comfort of St. Augustine's College, Canterbury, convened by Dick Hensman of the Overseas Council to discuss Theological Education and World Mission. The intention of this portentous title was to provide a common theme for twenty-five participants—missionaries, theologians, those engaged in training ordinands, and a leaven of seculars. It wasn't easy.

On the very first evening this difficulty was shown in the perplexed reception given to a paper of Denys Munby's, the economist. He was pleading that theologians should come humbly cap in hand to experts in other disciplines, and not go on making airy pronouncements about, for instance, the Doctrine of Work, without at least taking cognisance of the latest professional findings about the areas of work and what it meant to people. "So what!" was the immediate comment of the theologian, David Jenkins. Less trenchantly, he went on that in an age of increasingly specialised knowledge, how could theologians be expected to understand, even know about, what the practitioners of other disciplines were saying. Particularly social scientists! Theologians' job, after all, was to keep mediating divine truth. Certainly there was scope for fresh work on Christian ethics, to give recent Biblical theology its practical outlet; but mostly it was a misunderstanding of what theologians are for to bid them rely on the handouts of other experts as their grist.

Thus the plea Mr. Jenkins made was that theological education

must live up to its name, and reject the contemporary tendency to pack more and more extras into the syllabus. It was a rousing plea; and would have delighted at least one seminary chaplain, who longs for the day when a theological college will be recognisable as an intellectual community, not just as a sporting and spiritual one.

A rousing plea, and yet disastrous. For what is theology about if it can live immune from other disciplines? To say plonkingly it is about God is unhelpful and reduces it to the level of astrology, incapable of doing more than constructing a fabric of hypotheses about itself. It in fact relates to all experience, to immanent God as much as transcendent. All experience counts: not just personal relationships, as John Wren-Lewis keeps insisting, but the lot—patterns seen under microscopes and caught in abstract art (so well in the Beaugeards at the "Impact" exhibition) or the fascinating pliability of plastic, as well as the intent faces of men negotiating and the rapt glances of lovers, all surely can show something of God's creative activity, choked though they all are with the thorns and thistles of the Fall.

Even if those who took part in the conference at Canterbury came away recognising that there was no neat new formula for amalgamating the doctrines of theology with the discoveries experts make in secular studies, at least in recognising that, they were being no less than credal.

* * * *

The second conference was a course for ordinands at St. Katherine's Foundation, Stepney. This lovely haven in the docks reflects the eye for beauty and the high Christian Socialist passion of its Master, Fr. St. John Groser. Among a wide range of types who are drawn there by hook or by crook, from shop stewards to French worker-priests, these groups of ordinands come every now and then for a week's course on the relation between the Church and the world. The impression gained from taking part is that they do not like what they hear. If for instance it is put to them that it would take more than a bit extra prayer, a few more priests, and a dose of extra piety all round to make England Christian, they are very pained. What seems to go on in their theological colleges is that they are fed nowadays on *The Parish in Action* and Ernest Southcott and led to believe that they are about to minister in a situation where the world is gaping up hopefully and trustfully, waiting for the goodies which the Church (with an enormously capital "C") alone knows how to

drop into outspread laps. There is no harm in injecting theological students with idealism—heaven knows they will never have another chance to imbibe it neat—but when idealism lapses into a misconstrued romantic idea of the function, purpose and nature of the Church in Willesden or Wolverhampton, then it is worth making a plea for a little more honesty on the part of theological college staffs.

Just because one or two priests with particularly magnetic personalities have in recent years succeeded in making dead parishes flower in the desert, we leap into the assumption that the Church's job is at all costs to popularise itself, and rescue subtopia from aimless dreariness by providing a magic focus for everybody's latent Sense of Community. This is the story we hear. Now if ordinands believe this, believe that out there is a world gone cross-eyed with telly and overtime (while the going was good), and all they have to do is to go along, wave wands, be nice, swish round in a cassock and become a Labour member of the Borough Council, they are in for a calamitous shock. Oddly enough people have enough resilience to cope far better than the Church likes to imagine they can, without her blest ministrations. Oddly enough too (and lots of ordinands simply don't know this) the welfare state really does look after people.

There was the curate summoned in the middle of the night to the distraught mother whose son had disappeared. He pedalled off, gleeful at the thought of being really useful, really able to exercise his pastoral ministry at last; this is what Raindrop and Stockpot and Co. had all promised him. Wrapping his cloak around him, he knocked at the door. Dad ushered him in to the front room, where Mum was busy pouring out tea. Round her sat a couple of women, and a policeman. Dad said, "It's good of you to come, Padre. I expect you know Miss Jones from the probation service and Mrs. Baker of the child welfare clinic and Constable Wilkins." Padre didn't, but he shook hands with the brisk seriousness he felt appropriate. "They've all done their stuff," Dad went on, "now we'd be glad if you'd do yours." Padre was taken aback. He'd imagined himself hitting the headlines in a gallant rescue act. Now all the spadework had been done. What was left for him. Intercessions? Condolence? Compline? Preachments? He hadn't been prepared for this. He had been led to believe that the Church and the Kingdom of God were synonymous, and that he, Padre, could promote both in one breath. Such credulity, doomed too soon to break eager young hearts, is the outcome of an inadequate theology.

C. M.

Letters

CHURCH HOUSE—POWER STATION OR REPOSITORY

Dear Sir,

I write to correct what may possibly have been written inadvertently by the writer of the article "Church House—Power Station or Repository", when he included the name of this Council in what, if I read his intentions aright, was meant to be a list of Church of England organisations which "more than one Bishop . . . knows them one and all to be redundant and substantially wasting their time and money".

You will of course know that this Council is not an Anglican nor any other denominational activity, but is a co-ordinating body in which all the churches, and many outside them, work happily and harmoniously together.

I should not wish it to be thought that this letter is in any sense a criticism of the article in question, nor is it intended to attempt any refutation by a recapitulation of what this Council has accomplished over the 61 years of its existence. After all any organisation must be prepared to stand or fall by its record. But it is not unimportant to underline the significance and usefulness of a unique body in which all the denominations of the church can and do work together in good fellowship and, we hope, in effective service for our fellows.

Yours faithfully,
GEO. TOMLINSON,
General Secretary, The Public Morality Council.

AN INQUISITION OF PAPISM

Dear Sir,

John Wilkinson's article on Anglican Papalism started very promisingly on the nature of the Church and the problem of her membership. This is indeed the crux of the Papalist position. To compare, however, the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion with the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church is somewhat irrelevant, as those who hold this position completely reject the authority of these state documents which have never been promulgated by the Convocations. If this strict dis-

tinction of the Authority of the State from that of the Church seems unrealistic when speaking of the Established Church, one might well ask why the present Archbishop of Canterbury has found it necessary not to include the seal of the Confessional in the new draft Canon, but instead to make it an "Enactment of Convocation".

The point in a nutshell is this. Either the Church of England belongs to the Catholic Church or she does not. If she does then she is but two Provinces and by what authority can two Provinces define or formulate doctrine? If it does do so, then its deliberations are utterly null and void. It is meaningless to speak of "the teaching of the Church of England" as something distinct from that of the Catholic Church. Does the morality of birth control alter when one steps on to land under the jurisdiction of the English Metropolitans? Their views, when they contradict Catholic teaching are interesting but irrelevant. So long as words have not lost their meaning what other interpretation could be attached to the statement of the present Archibshop of Canterbury on the 30th January, 1951: "We have no doctrine of our own—we only possess the Catholic doctrine of the Catholic Church."

In passing, it ought to be pointed out that the above does not preclude the right of local Synods to order their own liturgy. Historically speaking it is accurate to say that the last liturgy properly promulgated for use in the English Provinces was the pre-Reformation Roman Missal. Thus it is curious that our Bishops object so much to its use; the more so as the remedy is in their hands. Perhaps the 1927-28 fiasco has made them more cautious. In any case, only the most theoretical of priests would insist on the full Latin Rite. There is such a thing as popular usage in Catholic thought and a *modus vivendi* can be found by using a combination of the Prayer Book and Missal which is acceptable to most of our Bishops and does not offend our conscience or obedience to Catholic discipline. In other words we can distinguish between the Pope's Petrine and Patriarchal powers.

Further, it is unjust to imply that "double-think" is necessary to make the Thirty-nine Articles compatible with the Tridentine Creed. The Articles were written before the doctrines, which laid behind the abuses that they condemned, had been defined. Of course there were errors in the Church; there always are. There may well be today some Romans who believe in the Hypostatic Union of Our Lady with the Blessed Trinity, but that does not deprive

us of the right to condemn the belief as wrong if we so wish. Whether the "Reformers" would have condemned these doctrines in the form of their later definition is a matter of opinion. In any case it is irrelevant, as a matter of historical fact the condemnation came before the definition. To suggest that the Thirty-nine Articles condemn the Tridentine formulae is to put the cart before the horse. My assent to them then is an assent to the spirit which fights against idolatry, superstitions, blasphemies and gross excesses and it is very difficult to see how it can be anything else.

Finally we come to the question of Ordination Oaths. The fact that the 1550 Ordination Oath has fallen into disuse would seem to suggest that, far from still being within the mind of Anglicanism, it was found to be incongruous with English Church thought. In any case how can State legislation possibly reveal the mind of the Church? If it cannot do this, all that are left are the legal considerations: but the Oath is now non-existent, therefore so are the legal obligations.

If it is thought that this position is disloyal to the Church of England, we must remember that this question was raised in the Church Assembly in June 1938, when certain members pressed for an official condemnation of the "Society for the Promotion of Catholic Unity". In his reply the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Lang, read the three axioms of the Council of the "Church Unity Octave" as accepted by him as the official definition of the Papalist position. While dissociating himself personally from this position, the Archbishop pronounced that it contravened no Anglican formulary whatever and was quite permissible for any member of the Church of England to hold. The objectors withdrew their motion.

It is regrettable that you gave so much space to an article condemning a position which has never been previously expounded in your pages; a position moreover, which is already far too misunderstood by our fellow churchmen. After all, we are fellow workers for the peace of Jerusalem. We feel that the Church must be free to order her own affairs, and must be firm in her doctrine and discipline founded on the Rock of Peter if she is to fulfil her high mission for the glory of God and the conversion of our country.

Yours sincerely,

MICHAEL NAYLOR.

ON BEING LOW CHURCH

Dear Sir,

Congratulations on the August edition. It was your best so far, and I am surprised it evoked so little reaction in the correspondence column.

"On being Low Church" was sane and reasonable: clearly, some of the pontificalia that emerges from Islington represents the extreme and not the type of the evangelical tradition, if the tenor of this article is anything to go by. May I, however, quarrel with Mr. Peter Morgan on one important issue? He speaks of the Family Communion Service as being "of far more limited appeal" than Mattins. Is this true, and is it the point?

When you read Dom Gregory Dix's fascinating description of a pre-Nicene Eucharist, with its secrecy and danger (*The Shape of the Liturgy*, chapter 6), you get a glimpse of what this service meant to the early Christians. It was their prime duty. There was no question of whether it "appealed" to them, nor could anything have replaced it as their principal act of worship. It seems to be a reversal of this principle to suggest that the Parish Eucharist should lose place to a service of supposedly greater appeal. Of course our worship should be enjoyed and shared to the full; but should the degree of that appeal define whether the worshipper is to be at the Eucharist or at an Office? Surely it is not partisan to see the choice as a matter of duty and discipline rather than of which is the more "popular".

Anyway, the Eucharist has demonstrated its strong appeal to the devotion of Christians down the ages, quiet apart from their duty to be there. This is particularly so when it incorporates hymns and a sermon. The statement that its musical setting is "infinitely more complicated" than the Anglican psalm chants astounds me. I would have thought that Merbecke was much simpler.

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN COOKE.

Correspondence on Thermodynamics, Psi and God will be printed next month.—ED.

Prayer: (1) The Starting Point

Sister Edna Mary, c.s.a.

"I know I ought to pray: the theory's all right, but it's when it comes to working it out in practice . . . I do try from time to time, but it all seems so remote, not a bit comparable to meeting one's fiancée or an old companion. I wish I *could* see it like that, but I wouldn't know where to begin."

Where does one begin?

This is a question to which God himself has given the answer, if we only take him at his word. The whole story of the Bible and of the Church is the story of God reaching out to meet men in whatever circumstances they find themselves, entering into their situation and in so doing teaching them new truths about himself and drawing them into closer communion with himself. It was true religious instinct which led the Jews to speak of God appearing to the founder of their race when he was a lonely refugee, hated by his own brother and that with every justification (Gen. 28). So similarly it was when Elijah was starving and in danger of his life, and feeling very ill-rewarded for his loyalty to God, that God showed him not only his providence but his purpose for the nation (I, Kings 19). And when a man was experiencing all the misery of an unhappy marriage, still loving the wife who was faithless to him, God used that situation to show him that he loves men every bit as much as a man can love his wife (Hosea 1-3 and *passim*).

This, of course, is the whole point of the Incarnation. The Incarnation is God entering fully into the human situation, meeting men as man, coming to each one in his own particular circumstances with his own particular difficulties and trials and sorrows, and speaking to each one in language which he could understand; and not only coming to meet men thus, but establishing an unbreakable bond of sympathy by actually sharing their life and experiences. And the first Christians soon realised that this sympathetic companionship did not cease when Christ was no longer visible to them; whatever happened to them, the Jesus whom they now realised to be God was with them, strengthening them and drawing them closer to himself in the sympathy of which his human life was the guarantee. To Paul, imprisoned and depressed at the apparent

failure of his plans, or fretting at his physical infirmity, Christ says "you shall be my witness in Rome" or "my grace is sufficient for you"; the writer to the Hebrews speaks of the sympathy Christ has with those who are tempted, because he himself had known temptation; the bishop Ignatius could speak of martyrdom as the means of the closest union with Christ, and the slave, Felicity, of Christ himself bearing the pains that she would face in the arena.

And this is just as true today. God meets each one of us in our own particular situation and with our own particular needs. This means that in all the circumstances of our life we can turn to him in the complete assurance of his understanding. Human friendship can mean a great deal when life is difficult, especially if we have a friend who has been through the same mill—we know that he understands and therefore we turn to him for sympathy and companionship, and the bitterest times are when there is no such friend to whom to turn. But whatever the circumstances in which we find ourselves, we can turn to God knowing that he fully understands, for he has experienced to the full what human life is like. Thus in the depression that comes from utter weariness we can turn to the Man who knew what it was to be so tired that he slept in a boat through a storm or sat waiting while his friends went to buy food. In pain of body we can turn to the man who was flogged and nailed to a Cross. When we are frustrated by other people's slowness or failure to understand, or when we fear the failure of our work, we can turn to the Man who had to leave his earthly work in the hands of followers who were still hoping for a national victory. When we are afraid of what the future holds, known or unknown, we can turn to the Man who shrank from the prospect ahead of him and who prayed for deliverance. When we are lonely or disappointed in our friends we can look for companionship to the Man whose only help on the way to execution came from a foreigner and whose companions as he died were two unknown criminals. And when we have to watch the suffering of those we love, so much harder to bear than our own because we can do nothing about them, we can turn to him who could only watch his mother as she stood by his Cross. And when it seems that even God has deserted us we can turn to the One who, although himself God, knew what even that experience was like.

Thus the starting-point of our prayer (as of our whole life) is the Incarnation, the mystery of the God who comes so far to meet men

that he lived a human life and for ever understands what that life is like. Thus, both in the times we set apart for prayer and in leisure moments during the day, we can begin by asking God to help us to realise that he is with us at that very moment; and if it is a time when we have to face sorrow or difficulty we do not have to pretend that things are better than they are (for there is no room for pretence in our relationships with God). Each individual can, like St. Paul (Rom. 8.35-36) make a list of all the worst things that can happen to him, and still assert that neither these nor anything else can separate him from the love of God. He can pour out all his misery to God and say "I know everything is in your hands; and even more important, I know that you understand everything".

There is much comfort to be found in this assurance; but there is more than comfort. The God who so understands our life is also the God who is in control of life, and who will give us whatever is best for us. This may not be an easy way out of our troubles—any more than Hosea's marriage was mended, or Paul's infirmity removed, or the Cross taken from Christ's path. But God will give to each the grace that he needs in his particular troubles, and will use them to draw each one closer to himself.

Sometimes the words of a familiar prayer may be a help in turning thus to God—such as the prayer of St. Richard or Dame Julian's expressions of trust in God; sometimes words from the Psalms or elsewhere in the Bible will help. At other times, or for other people, the best way is in whatever words come naturally—even if it is only "Dear God, look what a mess I'm in", or simply "My God", the possessive adjective marking the bond created by the divine sympathy. But no words are really necessary, and often it may be best just to turn silently to God, as we embrace a human friend, with no word spoken on either side.

But if it is to be prayer and not merely self-pity there must be a deliberate turning of the will to God—"Dear God, look what a mess I'm in", and not "O dear, what a mess I'm in". The motive power for such prayer is consideration of God, and especially of God incarnate. Thus, in the time we set apart for prayer we can do well to ponder on that particular aspect of the Incarnation which is the ground for our confidence that God sympathises with our particular circumstances—whether at that time they are troubled or happy—and then go on to some such prayer, spoken or silent, as has been mentioned. If this forms a part of our daily prayer, in

whatever situation we find ourselves, then we shall gradually find it becoming natural to turn to God in the daily detailed manifestations of that situation. As circumstances change, so will the form of prayer that is appropriate, but it will always be based on the assurance that God knows and understands all our experiences—and this in itself will make our communion with God an intrinsic part of our daily lives.

We apologise to readers who took umbrage at certain comments in our "Four-Star Churches". We would like to state however that in order even to be abused they had to be of a high standard. No bad church was even mentioned!—ED.

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

It's ghastly how, in times like these,
What with inflation, credit squeeze
And how the cost of living mounts,
For everything that really counts
One has to budget, or to miss
Today's all-but-necessities—
HP, the car and holidays,
And even cinemas and plays.
Of course, our income's gone up too,
But not enough for us to do
One half, without a frightful lot
Of thought, in view of what we've got.

I always think it wonderful,
In fact, a kind of miracle,
That, when most ordinary clubs
Have several times increased their subs.,
Church is the only place you find
Where sordid things are left behind.
They are so right, I have no doubt,
To leave materialism out,
And yet to think of all they do—
Of course, it's faith that sees them through.
So comforting, things as they are,
That there's one value still at par
Though trade recede and funds inflate—
Our pre-War sixpence in the plate.

RHODA TUCK POOK.

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